Microlink™
Electronic Mail

PLATO®
Computer-Based Education

Electronic Mail

Contents

Electronic Mail

Introduction

The Microlink™ communication features offer three distinct types of electronic communication.

Personal Mail is a completely private, one-way communication device that operates much like the standard mailing of a letter. You address your "envelope," type a message, and send it to the private mailbox of the receiver. In a matter of seconds, the addressee (and no one else) can read the note.

General Notes is a message service that functions as an electronic bulletin board. An ever-expanding list of notes files contains messages on topics ranging from microcomputer technology to movie reviews. This service is both sophisticated and easy to use.

Talk is a two-way communication feature that allows you to maintain conversation with another user without disturbing the contents of your screen. When you page someone (or when you are paged yourself), you engage in a conversation like one over a telephone, with one exception—you are typing messages rather than speaking.

This manual provides the basic operating instructions for each of these features and briefly discusses some of the more advanced options. It also introduces a management system for general notes, called the Notes File Sequencer.

Personal Mail

Each PLATO network user has a mailbox (file) that stores the messages (also called personal notes and pnotes) received from other users. You need very little PLATO experience to read and write personal notes. To begin, you should understand how to read, write, and delete notes; later, you can learn forwarding, copying, and other more advanced options.

Your personal notes file is similar, in many respects, to a mailbox. The file is identified by an address and has a limited capacity. When someone sends a personal note with your address (your sign-on name, group, and system), it arrives in your file and is added to the end of your notes.

New note

| Note 4 |

| Note 1 | | Note 2 | | Note 3 |

Existing notes
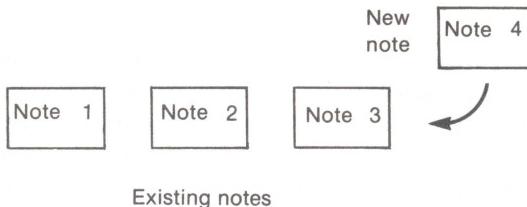
As you receive notes, they are added one by one until your file is full.

Reading Notes

Each time you sign on to PLATO services, the Microlink menu lets you know if you have received any new messages. It does this by adding an arrow to the left of the menu entries "Electronic Mail" and "Personal Mail."

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Type a letter:                    PLATO Microlink            │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│  a   User Information                                        │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│ ->b  Electronic Mail      ->m  Personal Mail                │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│  c   Text Processing       n   Read or Write General Notes  │
│                                                             │
│  d   Graphics Design       o   Notes File Sequencer         │
│                                                             │
│  e   PLATO Programs        p   Discussion Files             │
│                                                             │
│  f   File Management                                        │
│                                                             │
│  g   Reference Aids                                         │
│                                                             │
│  h   Other Features                                         │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│  i   Talk      j   Announcements    k   Calculate   l  Leave│
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│ Current Time:   8:49            Connect Time:   0:00         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

To read a note, choose options "b," Electronic Mail, and "m,"
Personal Mail. You will be taken directly to the first unread note.

Date & time of message ─────────────┐   ┌──── Position in queue

```
              Note #2 of 6

 12/23/82  1:14 pm  john doe / gold22            <── Sign on/group/system
                                                     of note author
 Thanks for getting me on the service. I will be glad to   <── Text of message
 give you feedback as we use the system. It appears to be
 working just fine so far.




 ≈                                            ≈




      Press:   SHIFT-HELP to delete this note
               SHIFT-LAB  to respond to this note
               HELP    for other options         <── Further options
```
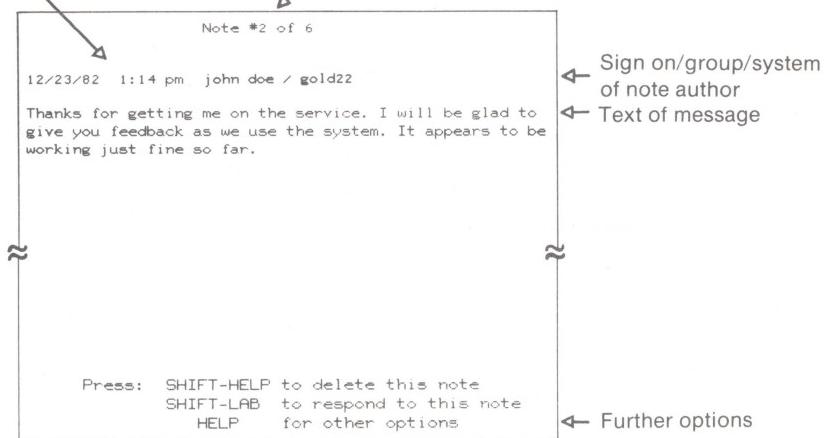
While reading notes, you can move from one note to another by
pressing NEXT. This takes you to the next note in the queue,
and pressing BACK takes you to the previous note. You can
also use the indicated options or press HELP to try others.

Deleting Notes

To delete a note, press SHIFT-HELP while the note is on your screen. You will probably use this option frequently in cleaning out your files. Since space is limited, you should always delete unneeded notes. Be careful. Once you press SHIFT-HELP, your note is gone and is not retrievable.

When you delete a note, all subsequent notes move up in the queue and are renumbered.

Sending Notes

To send someone a private note, choose "b," Electronic Mail, and "m," Personal Mail, on the Microlink menu. As mentioned previously, if you have a new note in your file, you see that. If not, you see the PERSONAL NOTES display that serves as the envelope on which you write the receiver's address.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│     ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐      │
│     │   P E R S O N A L    N O T E S      │      │
│     └─────────────────────────────────────┘      │
│                                                  │
│       Press:    LAB  to read your notes          │
│                 DATA for other options           │
│                 HELP for explanation and policy  │
│     ─────────────────────────────────────────    │
│                                                  │
│       To whom do you wish to send a note:        │
│                                                  │
│          Name ▷                                  │
│                                                  │
│          Group                                   │
│                                                  │
│          System                                  │
│                                                  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

You can send a note to anyone of whom you know the sign-on name, group, and system. You begin the note-sending process by typing all three pieces of information (pressing NEXT after each). You then see the notes editor display that allows you to enter the text of your note.

```
  Personal note to   john doe / gold22 / pca

Input→  ⋗
arrow
                                                              ← Text
                                                                of message

  ≋                                                    ≋



  Press:                                                      ← Options

  NEXT   for the next line      SHIFT-NEXT   when finished
  BACK   for the previous line  SHIFT-BACK   to exit and not send
  EDIT   to change the line     SHIFT-LAB    to insert a line
  HELP   for more directions    SHIFT-HELP   to delete lines
```
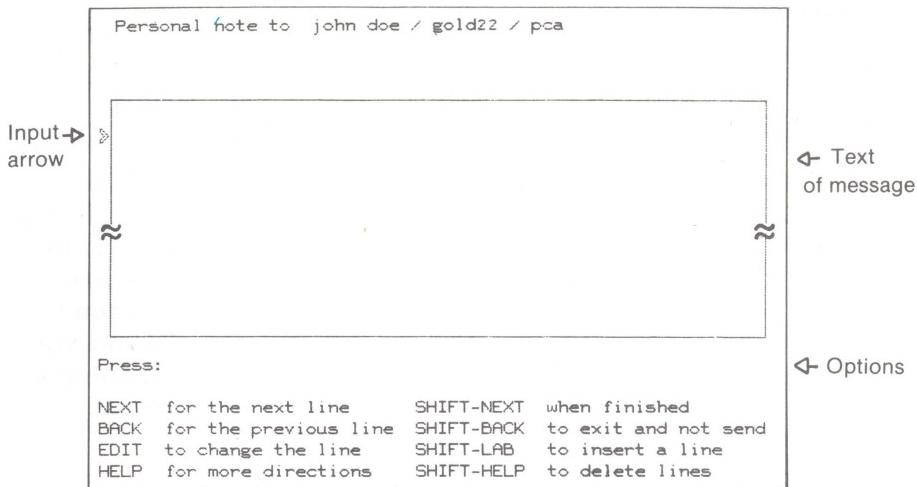
Your note can be twenty lines long and should remain inside the box. (For longer ones, simply use multiple notes.) Several editing keys are available to make writing the note easier. The most commonly used keys are ERASE, COPY, SHIFT-ERASE, and SHIFT-COPY. When you are finished with the note, press SHIFT-NEXT to send it or SHIFT-BACK to discard it.

Sending Duplicate Copies

After you send a note, a new line is added to the top of the PERSONAL NOTES display: "last note sent to _____."
When this message appears, you have the option to send copies of your last note to another user or to yourself. After typing the address, you can either send an exact copy of your last note (SHIFT-NEXT) or you can send an edited version (LAB). Only the last note you send is remembered and only until you leave the PERSONAL NOTES display.

Example

Suppose you want to invite several Microlink users to join a newly formed user's group. The following steps allow you to send a standard note to everyone, but still personalize each invitation.

```
        ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
        │   P E R S O N A L    N O T E S      │
        └─────────────────────────────────────┘


    Press:    LAB  to read your notes
              DATA for other options
              HELP for explanation and policy
    ─────────────────────────────────────────────


    To whom do you wish to send a note:


        Name = john Doe

        Group = gold 22

        System ⟩ pca
```

Step 1
On the PERSONAL NOTES display, type the address of the first person to whom you are sending a note.

```
  Personal note to   john doe / gold22 / pca

  ┌────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
  │ John,                                          │
  │ We are starting a PLATO Microlink users' group in town │
  │ next Tuesday.  I have a meeting room scheduled at the  │
  │ library at 7 p.m.  I'm inviting all Microlink users that │
  │⟩ I know of.  Hope to see you there.            │
  │                                                │
  └────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

  Press:

  NEXT   for the next line      SHIFT-NEXT  when finished
  BACK   for the previous line  SHIFT-BACK  to exit and not send
  EDIT   to change the line     SHIFT-LAB   to insert a line
  HELP   for more directions    SHIFT-HELP  to delete lines
```

Step 2
Type the complete text of the note, and press SHIFT-NEXT to send it.

```
Personal note to   jane smith / gold22 / pca


> Jane,
  We are starting a PLATO Microlink users' group in town
  next Tuesday.  I have a meeting room scheduled at the
  library at 7 p.m.  I'm inviting all Microlink users that
  I know of.  Hope to see you there.
```

Step 3
Type the address of the next note recipient, and press LAB to edit the last note.

```
Press:

NEXT  for the next line       SHIFT-NEXT  when finished
BACK  for the previous line   SHIFT-BACK  to exit and not send
EDIT  to change the line      SHIFT-LAB   to insert a line
HELP  for more directions     SHIFT-HELP  to delete lines
```

```
Personal note to   jane smith / gold22 / pca


> Jane,
  We are starting a PLATO Microlink users' group in town
  next Tuesday.  I have a meeting room scheduled at the
  library at 7 p.m.  I'm inviting all Microlink users that
  I know of.  Hope to see you there.
```

Step 4
Edit the note by changing the name on the salutation, and press SHIFT-NEXT to send the note.

Step 5
Repeat the above steps until you have sent all your notes.

```
Press:

NEXT  for the next line       SHIFT-NEXT  when finished
BACK  for the previous line   SHIFT-BACK  to exit and not send
EDIT  to change the line      SHIFT-LAB   to insert a line
HELP  for more directions     SHIFT-HELP  to delete lines
```

General Notes (Bulletin Boards)

A PLATO general notes file provides a means to read, write, and respond to messages in electronic bulletin boards. Each notes file consists of three distinct parts: a notes index, the notes themselves, and responses to the notes.

```
┌──────────────┐                                      ┌──────────────┐
│ Response 2   │                                      │ Response 2   │
│ ┌────────────┤          ┌────────────┐              │ ┌────────────┤
│ │ Response 1 │          │ Response 1 │              │ │ Response 1 │
│ │ ┌──────────┤          │ ┌──────────┤   ┌────────┐ │ │ ┌──────────┤
└─┤ │ Note 1   │          └─┤ │ Note 2  │   │ Note 3 │ └─┤ │ Note 4   │
  └─┤          │            └─┤         │   │        │   └─┤          │
    │          │              │         │   │        │     │          │
    └──────────┘              └─────────┘   └────────┘     └──────────┘
```

Note 1 Note 2 Note 3 Note 4

```
                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │  Notes File  │
                    │    Index     │
                    └──────────────┘
```
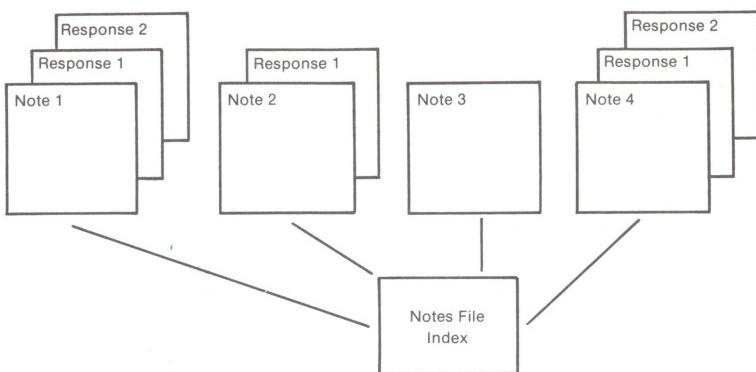
General Notes operates on a simple system of notes and responses. As notes enter the file, they form a queue and receive a number. As responses enter the file, they form a queue behind the base note. This note-response system allows all messages pertaining to a specific topic to be grouped together. You can, then, read all related messages at one time before moving to the next topic, and you can write a note in response to a specific message, as well. You can also move from base note to base note, skipping the responses.

Selecting a Notes File

To select from a list of notes files, choose options "b,"
Electronic Mail, and "p," Discussion Files. You then can choose
any file from the list. New subjects are frequently added, so
watch for items of interest.

```
PLATO Microlink Notefiles of Interest
                                     Page: 1 of 2


                                       (File Name)

Choose an option  >
           ♦
       a.   Discussion of This PLATO Service     (mcdn)

       b.   Confidential Aid on PLATO         (psonotes)

       c.   HELP for PLATO Authors           (helpnotes)

       d.   Micro Computer Discussion       (micronotes)

       e.   Your Opinion Not Ours             (forum)

       f.   That's Entertainment              (fms)

       g.   Sounds of Music                  (music)

       h.   Good For You! - Health Issues     (alive)

       i.   Fantasy World                     (frp)

       j.   Green Thumbs                    (garden)
```

You can also choose "b," Electronic Mail, and "n," Read or
Write General Notes. You must then type the filename of the
notes file.

Reading Notes

After choosing a file, you see a list of notes. To read a note, type
the number from the list. Press NEXT to move the list forward
and press BACK to move it backwards. Press HELP if you have
a question.

```
  #   Date      Title       Resp        Home Gardening Notes
  1  7/15   HELP!            3
  2  10/29  corn plant?      1      ** intersystem notesfile **
  3  12/2   dying plant      4
  4  12/5   pathos
  5  12/7   yellow leaves    6
  6  1/5    snow peas        1
* 7  1/14   seed companies   7      What note? >
  8  1/21   silver lace      4
  9  2/4    help!!!          3
```

Note
index

Press LAB   for file policy

SHIFT-LAB   to write a note
SHIFT-DATA to see access list
SHIFT-BACK to exit

Press HELP for information

When you see a note title that interests you, type the number of
that note and press NEXT.

Notes file
   title
Note
number
Note title

```
                   Home Gardening Notes
                   Note #11    (Roses)

                       1 response

       3/3/83  5:23 pm    john doe / gold22 / pca
```

Date and
time of
note

Address of
author

Hi, everyone. I could use some advice. I have a
miniature "rosebush I bought at the "Home and Garden Show"
here in Denver early in February. It's doing fine now
in my back porch window, but I'd like to plant it outside
once the weather gets warmer. Any suggestions as to
timing? Would spring or fall be best? Should I trim it
back after I transplant it? I love rosebushes, and now that
we have our own place, I'd like to start a rose garden.
Any ideas/suggestions would be greatly appreciated! Also,
if anyone knows of any good books on the subject of ros
gardens, I'd be interested. Thanks.

Text of
message

**** LAB for response ****

Once you enter the file of notes, you can move from one note to
another as much as you like. Pressing NEXT always takes you
to the next base note, BACK to the previous base note, and LAB

to the next response. DATA moves you to the next note or response you have not seen, and SHIFT-BACK returns you to the notes file index.
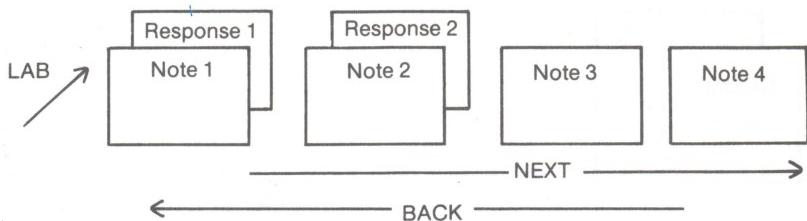
Writing Notes

To write a new base note, choose the appropriate file and press SHIFT-LAB on the notes file index. When you finish writing, you must press SHIFT-NEXT and then supply an identifying title for your note. The note is then added to the end of the list, receives a number, and identifies you as the author.

Writing Responses

While reading a note or response, you can add your own message to the end of the note string. To write a response, press SHIFT-LAB while the note or response is displayed.
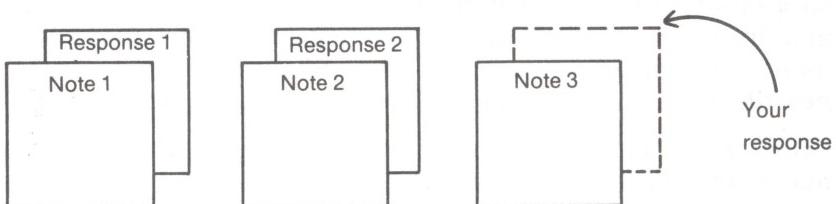
Moving Notes to Other Files

You can easily move electronic mail from one place to another.

General notes		
Personal notes		
	Shift-copy	
	Shift-F	General notes
		Personal notes
Source	Key press	Destination
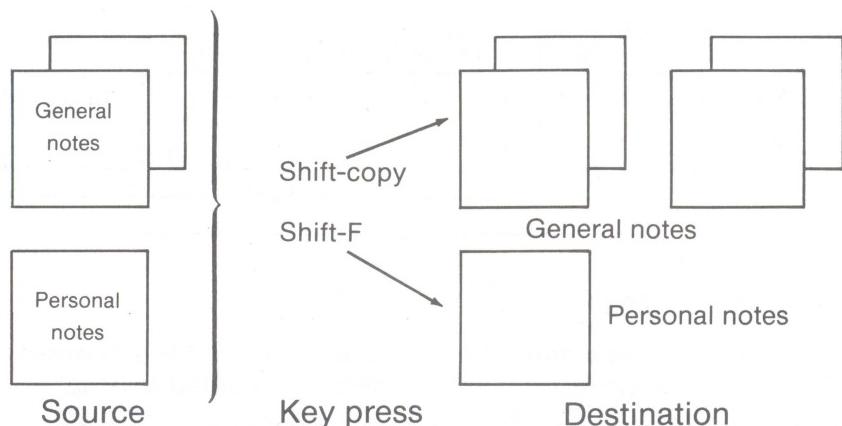
With the note on the screen, press SHIFT-F or SHIFT-COPY and follow the screen instructions. Press SHIFT-F to move the note to a personal notes file and SHIFT-COPY to move it to a general notes file. You can either send the original note or modify it before sending it.

Creating a General Notes File*

The Microlink library includes public notes files on many subjects. There may be times, however, when you wish to own and direct a notes file yourself. Private general notes files have many uses, including storage of personal notes, a forum for a new discussion, and storage of lesson comment notes.

Because your personal notes file has a limited capacity, you may wish to create a general notes file in which you store your personal notes, thus leaving room in your mail file. Whenever you receive an important note, you simply copy the note into your notes file and delete it from your mail file.

*Each notes file on PLATO services occupies file space and incurs charges. See Accessing PLATO Microlink Services for information on file-space charges.

You may, on occasion, wish to set up a notes file to discuss a specific topic. You could, for example, set up a file called "buildnts" for the discussion of construction and building issues and advertise its existence in other notes files. You then become the notes file director: you control the access list, you manage the size of the file, and you write and enforce the file policy. See the on-line notes file "notenote" for more information on owning and directing notes files.

You may also wish to use a general notes file to gather comments on programs you have written in the TUTOR language. You can create a notes file and attach it to a lesson. Then invite other users to try your program and make comments. For further information, see the notes file "notenote".

Talk

The Talk option is the method by which you can carry on a conversation with another user without disturbing the contents of your screen. The option is available at all times, but is especially easy to obtain when the Microlink menu is displayed. Talk, also called TERM-talk, simulates a face-to-face conversation and allows immediate feedback and constant interaction. To effectively use the Talk option, you should be able to page someone, answer a page, and type your conversation.

Paging Another User

The easiest method for paging and talking to someone is to use the Talk option, "i," on the Microlink menu. You may, however, want to page someone without leaving the display on which you are working. The Talk option allows you to use either method.

The User List

To page someone, you need the sign-on name and group name. You can determine the sign-on and group names of the current users by choosing "h," Other Features, and "n," User List, on the Microlink menus. To have your name appear on the user list, select "h," Other Features, and "r," User List; then press LAB (to display records). Then select item j. Press BACK twice to return to the main menu.

Paging from the Microlink menu

Once you know the sign-on and group names of the person you wish to page, choose option "i," Talk, on the Microlink menu. At the arrow—

> Enter name ▷

you enter the person's sign-on name and press NEXT. (If you make a mistake, ERASE it or press BACK to start the Talk process over again.) At the next arrow—

> Enter group ▷

you enter the person's group name and press NEXT. (You are told if that person is not currently using PLATO services or if you have made a mistake in typing.)

When the name and group are accepted, the message "Paging xxxx of group xxxx" flashes at the bottom of your screen until you get a response. If there is no answer after four or five flashes, you can assume the person is busy and press SHIFT-STOP to cancel the page.

When the person answers your page, two input arrows (▷) appear at the bottom of the page, and you can begin typing your messages.

Paging from a Display within a Program

The ability to page another user is yours at all times, whether you are reading notes, playing a game, or writing a document. To do so, use what is commonly referred to as TERM-talk.

To page a user with TERM-talk, first press the TERM key (Shift-F2 on your Personal Computer). Then answer the question—

What term? ⧫

by typing the word *talk* and press NEXT. Follow the steps explained previously: Type the name and group, and wait for a response.

Answering a Page

Whenever you are using Microlink services and you see the message, "TERM-talk: name/group," it means you are being paged to talk. The words following the colon indicate the name and group of the person paging you. To answer the page, first press the TERM (Shift-F2) key, then answer the question—

What term? ⧫

by typing the word *talk*. Almost immediately, the two input arrows will appear, signifying that your talk is underway.

Using Talk

As soon as a person answers a page, two input arrows appear at the bottom of your screen.

⧫

⧫

The pager's messages appear behind the upper arrow, and the responder's appear behind the lower arrow. When you fill a line with text, press either NEXT or LAB to clear the line. You can use other editing keys, such as EDIT and ERASE, during TERM-talks.

To end a TERM-talk session at any time, press SHIFT-STOP. As in telephone conversations, it is polite to say "good-bye" or give a similar clue that you are going to terminate the conversation.

Other Talk Options

There may be occasions in which you do not wish to participate in TERM-talks. You can refuse calls by pressing TERM (Shift-F2) and typing *busy*. Whoever pages you then sees the message: "xxxx (your name) is not available but has been told you called." When you are ready to take calls, press TERM (Shift-F2), type *busy*, and press DATA as instructed on the screen.

For further explanation of these and other features, see lesson Øtermtalk on the Microlink service. (Select option "e," then "n," and enter the file name Øtermtalk and press NEXT.)

Notes File Sequencer

You may find that there are a few notes files that you would like to read on a frequent basis. The Notes File Sequencer allows you to make a list of these frequently used notes files and move from one to the next.

In addition, you can move through only the unread notes and responses. To set up your Notes File Sequencer, first decide which files you want to read frequently. Pick any two or three to try if you are not sure. Then select "Notes File Sequencer" from the menu and follow the instructions.